

# News Release

## *National Wildlife Refuge System*



### **Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge**

**McGregor District  
401 Business Highway 18 N  
McGregor, IA 52157**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Clyde Male**

### **Beach Restoration Brings New Sand to Beaches**

Tim Yager, District Manager for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, McGregor District (Refuge) announced today that several popular beach locations within Pool 11 would be “rehabilitated” using sand dredged from the River.

One of the beach sites is located between river mile 610.5 and 611 on the left descending bank within the Refuge. This popular beach is known as the Million Dollar Island stretch and is often used by visitors who launch their boats from Cassville, Wisconsin or Guttenberg, Iowa.

Yager indicated that approximately 10,000 cubic yards of sand would be deposited at this location and landscaped using bulldozers to reestablish the beach along the waters edge.

The second beach is located on the Refuge at River Mile 599, on the popular beach location known as Ball’s Island Beach or the Waupeton Beach. This location will receive approximately 8,000 cubic yards of sand. The Ball’s Island beach has been popular in the past with many boaters who lock through the lock in Dubuque, Iowa and travel the 15 miles upriver to the first available beach. Beaches within the Dubuque Pool (Pool 12) are at a premium according to Yager.

Assistant District Manager Clyde Male who has worked on the McGregor Districts 100 miles of river for the last 21 years indicated that the beach locations receiving restoration work once supported the bulk of beach seeking Refuge visitors within Pool 11. Male went on to say the District visitation has changed a lot in the last ten years to a high of 1,700,000 visitors during 2005. Not only are there more visitors on the

Refuge now, but the method of getting to and from beaches has changed. The family flat bottom boat and a day of fishing are being replaced with a large fiberglass boat and a day in the sun on a beach.

Male and Yager agree that twenty years ago the Refuge would have had a hard time supporting any beach restoration work unless it was purely for the benefit of wildlife. Today, however, we seek out opportunities where we can provide a recreational benefit to our varied user groups. We still must balance the desires of the public with good sound science, ensuring that wildlife resources are not jeopardized. Unlike National Parks or other public green spaces, the National Wildlife Refuge System is mandated to insure that wildlife needs come first.

The sand being used for this restoration work is being removed from the main channel in close proximity to these beaches by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' channel maintenance activities. The beach placement of sand provides a cost effective way to remove sand from problem areas to ensure that navigation on the main channel is not restricted.

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is the most visited refuge in the United States. The refuge extends 261 miles along the Upper Mississippi River from Wabasha, Minn. to Rock Island, Ill., protecting and preserving habitat for migratory birds, fish, and a variety of other wildlife. This 240,000 acre refuge was established in 1924.